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ABSTRACT

This guide assists educators in the process of implementing or strengthening a using the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning (EIC) program in their school. The purpose of the self-evaluation guide is to provide teachers and principals with an instrument that they can use to assess the current status of their programs in relation to the leadership that characterizes a strong EIC program. It begins with a Summary of Leadership Processes for EIC Programs. Selection of these processes was based on research into the leadership and community support that is common to schools successfully implementing EIC. The body of the guide presents self-evaluation rubrics organized around each of the leadership processes. Each process is described on a rubric sheet that defines important terminology and explains other significant aspects of leadership and community support. The rubric sheets delineate several measurable attributes that educators can use to help determine the progress of their program. The Self-Evaluation Summary for EIC Program Leadership and Support allows educators to gather together information from the individual rubric sheets. (SAH)

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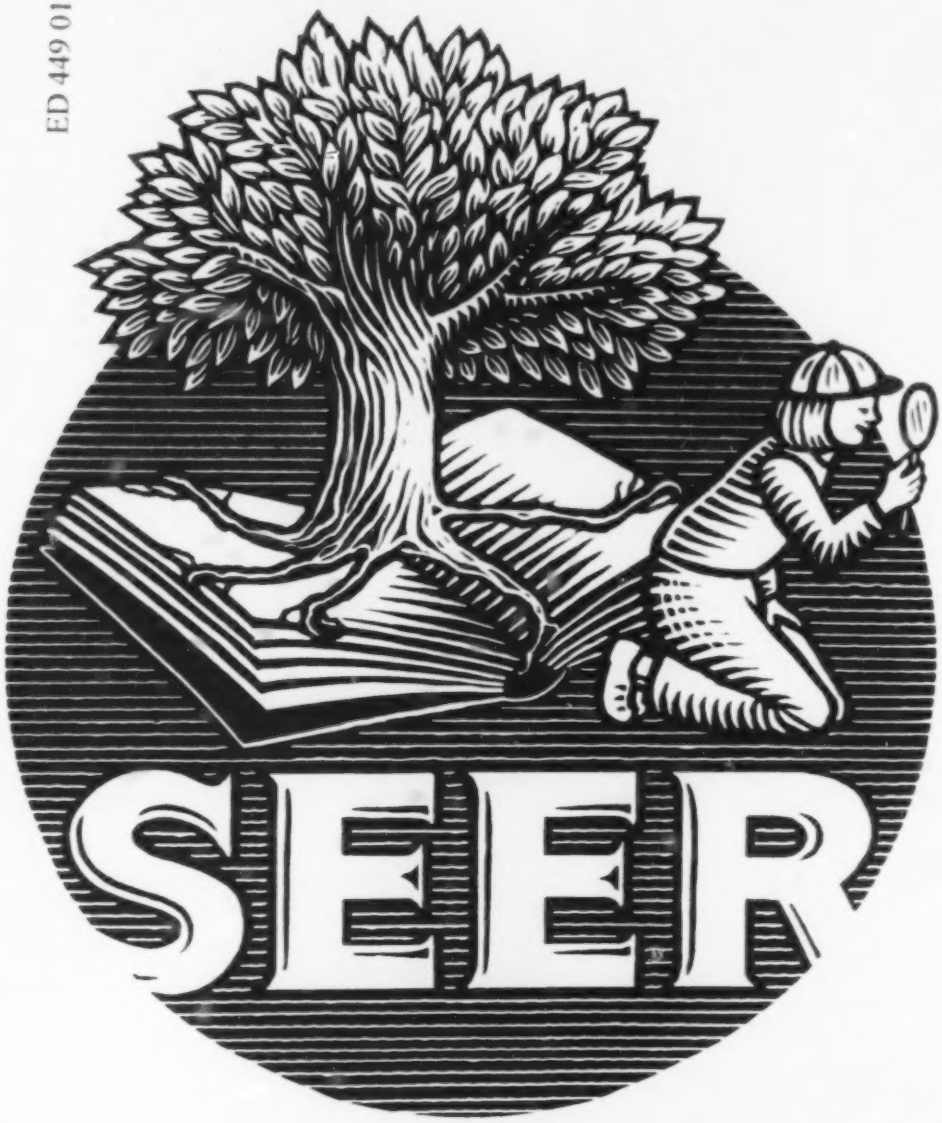

Developing Leadership and Community to Support an EIC Program in Your School

A Self-evaluation Guide

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- Ohio Department of Education
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The Pew Charitable Trusts sponsor SEER. The Council of Chief State School Officers administer SEER's funding.

To learn more about EIC:
The State Education and Environment Roundtable maintains a site on the Internet devoted to information on EIC-based learning: **http://www.seer.org**. The site contains a variety of links to participating state agencies, reports, reference materials, and other educational resources.

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INTRODUCTION

The State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER) developed this document to assist educators in the process of implementing or strengthening an EIC program in their school. The purpose of this *Self-evaluation Guide* is to provide teachers and principals with an instrument they can use to assess the current status of their programs in relation to the leadership that characterizes a strong EIC program.

The rubrics presented in this document are only one component in SEER's Professional Development Series. This guide is intended for use in conjunction with supporting documents and other resource materials. Educators who participate in one of SEER's EIC Implementation Seminars receive specific preparation in using these self-assessment rubrics to evaluate their programs.

Research about the educational efficacy of the EIC approach and other background information are provided in SEER's report, *Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning* (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998). This report documents a two-year, nationwide study of 40 schools that use EIC. Two videos compliment the report. *Beyond Walls, Across Disciplines* presents an elementary, middle and high school implementing EIC and shows EIC's potential across the disciplines. *Closing the Achievement Gap: A Video Summary* provides an overview of the research results with accompanying comments from educators implementing EIC.

This document begins with a *Summary of Leadership Processes for EIC Programs*. Selection of these processes was based on research into the leadership and community support that are common to schools successfully implementing EIC.

The body of the guide presents *Self-evaluation Rubrics* organized around each of the leadership processes. Each process is described on a rubric sheet that defines important terminology and explains other significant aspects of leadership and community support. The rubric sheets delineate several measurable attributes that educators can use to help determine the progress of their program in relation to those attributes.

The rubric sheets provide a simple chart, associated with each attribute, with space for educators to rank the current status of leadership and community support for EIC in their program or school. A ranking of "4" indicates the "ideal" situation while "1" indicates a basic level of accomplishment. Each sheet also allows space for describing current practices, benefits and first steps toward "moving up the rubrics."

The *Self-Evaluation Summary for EIC Program Leadership and Support*, toward the end of the document, allows educators to gather together the information from the individual rubric sheets. They can use this summary to evaluate the overall status of their program and set priorities for their follow-up activities.

Comparing rubric sheets from one year to the next allows educators to self-evaluate their progress. This "internal" status report can be helpful to teams as they set their goals, implement new program activities, work toward further improvement and participate in ongoing self-evaluation.

SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP PROCESSES FOR EIC PROGRAMS

EIC programs rely upon:

I. **Educational Leadership** — The educational leadership team:
   A. Organizes and operates an advisory committee comprised of individuals, representing the cultural, political and economic diversity of the community, having a firm commitment to the program and playing a strong leadership role in its design, planning and evaluation;
   B. Engages the school district-level administration so that it demonstrates a firm commitment to the program, and provides strong leadership and instructional support;
   C. Encourages the school-site administration to demonstrate and communicate its firm commitment to the program, and provides guidance and leadership in its planning and implementation;
   D. Supports the program coordinator as they provide educators, the school and school district with the skills and resources (e.g., funding, partnerships, mentor and volunteer programs, etc.) so that they can independently, plan, organize and sustain their programs; and,
   E. Sustains a partnership network that includes many individuals, agencies, service organizations and corporate partners, who provide a variety of services and resources, demonstrate a long-term commitment to the program and invest in its sustainability.

II. **Community Support** —The educational leadership team and partnership network work together to:
   A. Involve members representing the full diversity of the community in mentoring programs, internships and service-learning opportunities that offer a variety of community-based experiences;
   B. Ensure necessary program funds, services and resources, and have a strategy that will sustain program activities; and,
   C. Help communicate program successes to the community, providing recognition for students' and teachers' accomplishments, and opportunities to showcase and celebrate their successes.

III. **Program Planning and Evaluation** — The educational leadership team works with the partnership network to:
   Create a shared vision; define program goals and objectives; and, support long-range planning and implementation; and,
   B. Conduct both formative (ongoing) and regularly scheduled (e.g., annual) program evaluations and reflects on the results as a means of continuously improving the program.

IV. **In-service and Pre-service Professional Development** — The educational leadership team and partnership network:
   A. Support the program goals by providing systemic and ongoing professional development for teachers and other instructional partners, covering all of the practices involved in successful programs;
   B. Work with local colleges on pre-service training to ensure that new hires to the school are prepared to participate in and support the program; and,
   C. Provide educators with experiences that enhance their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally diverse audiences.

Educational Leadership

In EIC programs, representatives of a cross-section of the educational system and community provide educational leadership. They coordinate their efforts to assure effective involvement and facilitate communication with all segments of the community.

Successful EIC programs rely on seven principal levels of educational leadership and support including:

- teachers guiding curriculum design and student learning;
- advisory committees representing the views of community members (e.g., parents, business leaders, agencies, land owners, conservation groups, universities, etc.);
- school district administrators providing administrative support and infrastructure;
- school-site administrators offering educational direction and managerial support;
- program coordinators acting as liaisons, linking all members of the educational leadership team and facilitating the entire program; and,
- parental community actively participating and supporting program activities;
- partnership network providing a variety of services and resources that support implementation of the program.

In an EIC program:

A. The educational leadership team organizes and operates an advisory committee comprised of individuals, representing the cultural, political and economic diversity of the community, having a firm commitment to the program and playing a strong leadership role in its design, planning and evaluation.

The advisory committee:

4 Consistently provides the program with highly effective, ongoing leadership in program design, planning and evaluation, represents the full cultural, political and economic diversity of school and community members, and works to continuously improve its own effectiveness.

3 Often involves other school and community members who demonstrate an interest in taking a leadership role in the program.

2 Occasionally involves other school and community members who may demonstrate only a limited commitment to their leadership and decision-making responsibilities.

1 Rarely expands to incorporate individuals beyond those who originated the program.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

- continued -

B. The educational leadership team engages the school district-level administration so that it demonstrates a firm commitment to the program, and provides strong leadership and instructional support.

District-level administration:

4 Consistently communicates its firm commitment to the program and provides strong leadership; professional development opportunities; instructional support; while requiring new teachers to participate and provides the program with a full-time coordinator.

3 Often demonstrates interest in or understanding of the program and communicates their commitment by providing some professional development opportunities; instructional support; and encourages new teachers to participate and provides the program with a part-time coordinator.

2 Occasionally demonstrates interest in or understanding of the program.

1 Rarely acknowledges the program or provides it with leadership and/or encourages teachers to participate.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

C. The educational leadership team encourages the school-site administration to demonstrate and communicate its firm commitment to the program, and provides guidance and leadership in its planning and implementation.

School administration:

4 Consistently communicates its firm commitment to the program and provides leadership, guidance, and programmatic support, playing an active role in planning, decision-making and program activities.

3 Often demonstrates interest in or understanding of the program and communicates their commitment by providing guidance, having a visible role in planning, decision-making and program activities.

2 Occasionally demonstrates interest in or understanding of the program, sometimes provides guidance and support.

1 Rarely provides the program with leadership and/or encourages teachers to participate.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

D. The educational leadership team supports the program coordinator as they provide educators, the school and school district with the skills and resources (e.g., funding, partnerships, mentor and volunteer programs, etc.) so that they can independently plan, organize and sustain their programs.

The program coordinator:

4 Consistently helps educators, the school faculty and school district administrators develop the skills and resources (e.g., funding, partnerships, mentor and volunteer programs, etc.) so that they can independently, plan, organize and sustain their programs.

3 Often works toward the sustainability of the program, focuses on helping teachers and administrators develop the skills and resources that will help them become more independent, while providing some project planning services for individual teachers.

2 Occasionally works toward the sustainability of the program and helping teachers develop their skills and resources, while focussing most of effort on project planning services for individual teachers.

1 Rarely works on activities that will assure the sustainability of the program but rather provides project planning services for individual teachers.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

E. The educational leadership team sustains a partnership network that includes many individuals, agencies, service organizations and corporate partners, who provide a variety of services and resources, demonstrate a long-term commitment to the program and invest in its sustainability.

The partnership network:

4 Consistently involves diverse and numerous community members who provide a variety of services and resources, demonstrate a long-term commitment to the program, invest in its sustainability and provide assistance with implementing specific projects.

3 Often involves diverse community members who provide a variety of services and resources, invest in the program's sustainability and provide assistance with implementing specific projects.

2 Occasionally involves community members who provide a variety of services and resources for the program and assistance with implementing specific projects.

1 Rarely involves partners in activities other than implementing specific projects.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

Community Support

Support for an EIC program is a collaborative endeavor of a diverse group of partners who represent parents, school and community stakeholders. A strong working relationship connects the educational leadership team (district and school administrators, advisory committee and program coordinator) with the external partnership network (parents, community members, government agencies, service organizations and business leaders).

The educational leadership team and partnership network provide ongoing program support by offering: mentoring and learning opportunities; funding, technical services and other resources; and, recognition for the accomplishments of students and teachers.

In an EIC program:

A. The educational leadership team and partnership network work together to involve members representing the full diversity of the community in mentoring programs, internships and service-learning opportunities that offer a variety of community-based experiences.

The educational leadership team and partnership network work together to:

4 Consistently involve a broad range of community members (government agencies, businesses, service organizations, volunteer networks and older students) in mentoring programs, internships and service-learning opportunities while offering diverse, community-based experiences.

3 Often involve older students and community members in mentoring programs, internships and service-learning opportunities, and offers many community-based experiences.

2 Occasionally involve older students and community members as mentors or volunteers in service-learning activities and provides some community-based experiences.

1 Rarely involve older students or community members as mentors or volunteers in service-learning activities.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

B. The educational leadership team and partnership network ensure necessary program funds, services and resources, and have a strategy that will sustain program activities.

The educational leadership team and partnership network work together to:

4 Consistently secure necessary program funds, services and resources from the district, school, community partners and grants, and have a functioning funding strategy that provides long-term financial stability and sustainability for program activities.

3 Often seek necessary program funds, services and resources from the district, school, community partners and grants, have a developing funding strategy and are working toward long-term financial stability for program activities.

2 Occasionally seek necessary program funds, services and resources from the district, school, community partners and grants.

1 Rarely seek funds or services for activities other than implementing specific projects.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

C. The educational leadership team and partnership network help communicate program successes to the community, providing recognition for students' and teachers' accomplishments, and opportunities to showcase and celebrate their successes.

The educational leadership team and partnership network work together to:

4 Consistently involves the community in communicating about the program's structure, benefits and successes; providing recognition for students' and teachers' accomplishments; and, helping showcase and celebrate their achievements.

3 Often communicates about the program's structure, benefits and successes; provides recognition for students' and teachers' accomplishments; and, helps showcase and celebrate their achievements.

2 Occasionally involves students, teachers and community members in communicating about project activities.

1 Rarely communicate about the program but rather focus on the students' project activities.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

Program Planning and Evaluation

The long-term success of an EIC program depends on having a unified, team plan that takes into account the vision, goals and objectives of a broad base of community members. When teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the plan, it increases their buy-in and long-term commitment to the program's success.

Evaluating the program's progress and effects on student achievement, on a regular basis, is also crucial to success. The collection of baseline data needs to begin prior to the implementation of the program so that change can be accurately measured. The results of thorough evaluations can play an important part in helping teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders make adjustments to the program that can increase resulting benefits.

In an EIC program:

A. The educational leadership team works with the partnership network to create a shared vision; define program goals and objectives; and, support long-range planning and implementation.

The educational leadership team and partnership network:

4 Consistently develop, reexamine and implement their shared vision, overall program goals and objectives, strategies and long-range plans in a way that effectively involves the comprehensive leadership team and partnership network.

3 Often develop their shared vision, overall program goals and objectives, and long-range plans in a way that more effectively involves leadership team and partnership network.

2 Occasionally develop their shared vision, overall program goals and objectives, and program plans in a way that involves a larger leadership team and partnership network.

1 Rarely develop their shared vision or overall program goals and objectives in a way that involves a complete leadership team or partnership network.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

B. The educational leadership team works with the partnership network to conduct both formative (ongoing) and regularly scheduled (e.g., annual) program evaluations and reflects on the results as a means of continuously improving the program.

The educational leadership team and partnership network:

4 Consistently analyze progress by conducting formative and regularly scheduled program evaluations to: continuously improve the program through ongoing reflection; appraise progress toward goals; review objectives; assess benefits to students; and, adjust plans.

3 Often analyze their progress by conducting formative, ongoing evaluations to: help them appraise progress toward goals, review objectives and adjust plans as a means of continuously improving the program.

2 Occasionally analyze their progress by conducting irregular evaluations to help them appraise progress toward goals, review objectives and adjust plans.

1 Rarely analyze their progress, adjust plans or undertake program evaluations.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

In-service and Pre-service Professional Development

An EIC program depends on teachers and instructional partners who understand and can readily incorporate the EIC approach into their instructional practices. Even experienced teachers may require professional development opportunities that help them learn one or more of the principal practices involved in the EIC approach, such as interdisciplinary instruction, curriculum planning or problem-based learning. At the same time, it is important to work with colleges of education to help them incorporate these approaches into their pre-service program, preparing new teachers to join the faculty of EIC-based schools.

In an EIC program:

A. The educational leadership team and partnership network support the program goals by providing systemic and ongoing professional development for teachers and other instructional partners, covering all of the practices involved in successful programs.

The educational leadership team:

4 Consistently provides ongoing professional development for teachers and other instructional partners in a way that meets their changing needs and provides instruction in all of the practices involved in successful programs.

3 Often provides ongoing professional development for teachers, provides instruction in all of the practices involved in successful programs.

2 Occasionally provides professional development for teachers provides instruction in some of the practices involved in successful programs.

1 Rarely provides professional development for teachers.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

B. The educational leadership team and partnership network work with local colleges on pre-service training to ensure that new hires to the school are prepared to participate in and support the program.

The educational leadership team and partnership network:

4 Consistently work with local colleges on pre-service training for new teachers to ensure that new hires to the school are prepared to participate in and support the program.

3 Often work with local colleges on pre-service training for new teachers to ensure that new hires are prepared to participate in the program.

2 Occasionally work with local colleges on improving their pre-service training for new teachers.

1 Rarely work with local colleges on pre-service training for new teachers.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice:
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric":	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric":	

C. The educational leadership team and partnership network provide educators with experiences that enhance their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally diverse audiences.

The educational leadership team and partnership network:

4 Consistently provides educators with formal professional development opportunities and targeted experiences to enhance their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally diverse audiences.

3 Often provides educators with experiences to enhance their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally diverse audiences.

2 Occasionally provides educators with experiences to enhance their understanding of culturally diverse groups.

1 Rarely provides educators with experiences to enhance their understanding of culturally diverse groups.

Circle the number that most closely describes your program or school Circle as appropriate 4 3 2 1	Describe current practice
Benefits you or your students might gain by "moving up the rubric"	
First steps that you and your team might take to "move up the rubric"	

SELF-EVALUATION SUMMARY FOR EIC PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT

School Name:_____ Date Completed:_____

Use this page to summarize the scores you gave your school on each of the previous pages.

Educational Leadership	Circle as appropriate
A. Organizes and operates an advisory committee comprised of individuals, representing the cultural, political and economic diversity of the community, having a firm commitment to the program and playing a strong leadership role in its design, planning and evaluation;	4 3 2 1
B. Engages the school district-level administration so that it demonstrates a firm commitment to the program, and provides strong leadership and instructional support;	4 3 2 1
C. Encourages the school-site administration to demonstrate and communicate its firm commitment to the program, and provides guidance and leadership in its planning and implementation;	4 3 2 1
D. Supports the program coordinator as they provide educators, the school and school district with the skills and resources (e.g., funding, partnerships, mentor and volunteer programs, etc.) so that they can independently, plan, organize and sustain their programs; and,	
E. Sustains a partnership network that includes many individuals, agencies, service organizations and corporate partners, who provide a variety of services and resources, demonstrate a long-term commitment to the program and invest in its sustainability.	4 3 2 1

Community Support	Circle as appropriate
A. Involve members representing the full diversity of the community in mentoring programs, internships and service-learning opportunities that offer a variety of community-based experiences;	4 3 2 1
B. Ensure necessary program funds, services and resources, and have a strategy that will sustain program activities; and,	4 3 2 1
C. Help communicate program successes to the community, providing recognition for students' and teachers' accomplishments, and opportunities to showcase and celebrate their successes.	4 3 2 1

Program Planning and Evaluation	Circle as appropriate
A. Create a shared vision; define program goals and objectives; and, support long-range planning and implementation; and,	4 3 2 1
B. Conduct both formative (ongoing) and regularly scheduled (e.g., annual) program evaluations and reflects on the results as a means of continuously improving the program.	4 3 2 1

In-service and Pre-service Professional Development	Circle as appropriate
A. Support the program goals by providing systemic and ongoing professional development for teachers and other instructional partners, covering all of the practices involved in successful programs;	4 3 2 1
B. Work with local colleges on pre-service training to ensure that new hires to the school are prepared to participate in and support the program; and,	4 3 2 1
C. Provide educators with experiences that enhance their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally diverse audiences.	4 3 2 1

A Word of Encouragement

EIC, using the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning, is an approach that requires strong educational leadership, community partnerships and ongoing professional development to succeed. Educators should feel encouraged if they are making progress with any of the leadership processes and beginning to see their programs "moving up the rubrics." In some cases, progressing from a "1" to a "2" or a "2" to a "3" can be more difficult than moving from a "3" to a "4."

While in an ideal situation an EIC program would achieve a ranking of "4" on every attribute of leadership and community support, in practice this is not realistic. Educators can expect that their programs will be strong in some areas and weak in others. They should also anticipate significant year-to-year fluctuations as teaching teams, community partners and administrators change.

This self-evaluation guide is just one tool in the complex process of achieving school improvement. Educators, from some of the most successful EIC programs, have suggested some other key steps. Their recommendations include:

- building a team with like-minded teachers;
- designating one or two individuals to be the team's hub of communication;
- beginning planning well in advance of implementation;
- investing ample time right from the start, formulating team plans for curricular integration requires substantial preparation;
- starting small, perhaps one teaching team and one or two month-long study units;
- building gradually, adding new team members and increasing the number of study units;
- seeking administrative guidance, "buy-in," and support from the inception;
- establishing a network of support involving both community and technical resources such as: parents, local businesses, and other community members; university faculty, resource management agencies (water district, parks department, etc.), nature centers, zoos, and museums; and,
- reviewing your progress, self-evaluating, and asking others for suggestions about how to improve and expand your program.

Perhaps most important, be patient, the Roundtable's research suggests that it takes three to four years for teams to solidify and programs to gain stability. Equally significant, however, the research indicates that the time and effort invested provides important long-term benefits for students and teachers.

NOTES

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